

Docket No. AUS920020087US1

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method in a data processing system for managing electronic mail messages from a post office protocol 3 server, the method comprising:
 - retrieving header information for electronic messages on the post office protocol 3 server to form retrieved header information;
 - updating an attribute file, wherein the attribute file includes an indication of whether an electronic mail message has been read;
 - presenting a mail list on a display using the retrieved header information and the attribute file; and
 - responsive to a selection of an electronic mail message from the mail list, retrieving and presenting the electronic mail message.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic mail message is retrieved from the post office protocol 3 server.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic mail message is retrieved from a cache on the data processing system.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of retrieving the header information retrieves only the header information from the post office protocol 3 server.

Docket No. AUS920020087US1

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of retrieving the header information comprises retrieving all parts of the electronic message from the post office protocol 3 server.

- 5 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic mail message includes an attachment and further comprising:
responsive to a user request to save the electronic mail message, filtering the message to selectively save the attachment on the data processing system.

- 10 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the filtering step comprises:
prompting for a user input as to whether the attachment is to be saved; and
saving the attachment along with the electronic mail
15 message if the user input indicates that the attachment is to be saved.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the filtering step comprises:
comparing the attachment with criteria to form a
20 comparison;
saving the attachment based on the comparison.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the criteria includes at least one of a file size of the attachment and a file type of the attachment.

- 25 10. A method for sharing a mail account from a post office protocol 3 server with a plurality of users having at least one computing device having limited storage

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Docket No. AUS920020087US1

amongst the plurality of users, the method comprising:

retrieving portions of incoming mail in storage in a mail inbox at the post office protocol 3 server, wherein the incoming mail is kept in storage in the mail box at the post office protocol 3 server;

presenting a mail list using the portions of incoming mail retrieved from the mailbox at the post office protocol 3 server;

retrieving, from the post office protocol 3 server, individual messages from the mail inbox at the post office protocol 3 server if one of the users selects a message for display; and

filtering the message from the individual messages to a folder in a shared directory in the local storage in response to a user request to save the message, wherein the shared directory is shared by each user sharing the mail account.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

creating a bookkeeping file at the at least one computing device, wherein the bookkeeping file indicates which messages have been viewed and which messages have been deleted; and

resyncing the bookkeeping file at a given computing device each time the incoming mail is accessed and for each mail operation at the at least one computing device.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the filtering step includes:

prompting for a user input as to whether an attachment associated with the message should be saved; receiving the user input in response to prompting

Docket No. AUS920020087US1

for the user input to form a received user input; and
selectively saving the attachment associated with
the message based on the received user input.

13. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

5 retrieving message headers from the post office
protocol 3 server upon connection of the at least one
computing device to the post office protocol 3 server;
and

10 displaying a list of the message headers at the at
least one computing device.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein each user has a
folder in the shared directory.

15 15. The method of claim 10, wherein the incoming mail is
kept in the storage at the post office protocol 3 server
using a configurable option for the post office protocol
3 client.

16. A data processing system for managing electronic
mail messages from a post office protocol 3 server, the
data processing system comprising:

20 a bus system;
a communications unit connected to the bus system;
a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the
memory includes a set of instructions; and
a processing unit connected to the bus system,
25 wherein the processing unit executes the set of
instructions to retrieve header information for
electronic messages on the post office protocol 3 server
to form retrieved header information; update an attribute

2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176

Docket No. AUS920020087US1

file in which the attribute file includes an indication of whether an electronic mail message has been read; present a mail list on a display using the retrieved header information and the attribute file; and retrieve
5 and present the electronic mail message in response to a selection of an electronic mail message from the mail list.

17. A data processing system for sharing a mail account from a post office protocol 3 server with a plurality of
10 users having at least one computing device having limited storage amongst the plurality of users, the data processing system comprising:

a bus system;
a communications unit connected to the bus system;
15 a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the memory includes a set of instructions; and
a processing unit connected to the bus system, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to retrieve portions of incoming mail in
20 storage in a mail inbox at the post office protocol 3 server in which the incoming mail is kept in storage in the mail box at the post office protocol 3 server;
present a mail list using the portions of incoming mail retrieved from the mailbox at the post office protocol 3
25 server; retrieve, from the post office protocol 3 server, individual messages from the mail inbox at the post office protocol 3 server if one of the users selects a message for display; and filter the message from the individual messages to a folder in a shared directory in
30 the local storage in response to a user request to save

Docket No. AUS920020087US1

the message in which the shared directory is shared by each user sharing the mail account.

18. A data processing system for managing electronic mail messages from a post office protocol 3 server, the
5 data processing system comprising:

first retrieving means for retrieving header information for electronic messages on the post office protocol 3 server to form retrieved header information;

updating means for updating an attribute file,
10 wherein the attribute file includes an indication of whether an electronic mail message has been read;

presenting means for presenting a mail list on a display using the retrieved header information and the attribute file; and

15 second retrieving means and second presenting means, responsive to a selection of an electronic mail message from the mail list, for retrieving and presenting the electronic mail message.

19. The data processing system of claim 18, wherein the
20 electronic mail message is retrieved from the post office protocol 3 server.

20. The data processing system of claim 18, wherein the electronic mail message is retrieved from a cache on the data processing system.

25 21. The data processing system of claim 18, wherein the retrieving means for retrieving the header information retrieves only the header information from the post office protocol 3 server.

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Docket No. AUS920020087US1

27. A data processing system for sharing a mail account from a post office protocol 3 server with a plurality of users having at least one computing device having limited storage amongst the plurality of users, the data

5 processing system comprising:

first retrieving means for retrieving portions of incoming mail in storage in a mail inbox at the post office protocol 3 server in which the incoming mail is kept in storage in the mail box at the post office

10 protocol 3 server;

first presenting means for presenting a mail list using the portions of incoming mail retrieved from the mailbox at the post office protocol 3 server;

15 second retrieving means for retrieving, from the post office protocol 3 server, individual messages from the mail inbox at the post office protocol 3 server if one of the users selects a message for display; and

20 filtering means for filtering the message from the individual messages to a folder in a shared directory in the local storage in response to a user request to save the message in which the shared directory is shared by each user sharing the mail account.

28. The data processing system of claim 27, wherein the creating means is a first creating means and further

25 comprising:

second creating means for creating a bookkeeping file at the at least one computing device, wherein the bookkeeping file indicates which messages have been viewed and which messages have been deleted; and

30 resyncing means for resyncing the bookkeeping file at a given computing device each time the incoming mail

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Docket No. AUS920020087US1

is accessed and for each mail operation at the at least one computing device.

29. The data processing system of claim 27, wherein the filtering means includes:

5 prompting means for prompting for a user input as to whether an attachment associated with the message should be saved;

 receiving means for receiving the user input in response to prompting for the user input to form a
10 received user input; and

 saving means for selectively saving the attachment associated with the message based on the received user input.

30. The data processing system of claim 27, wherein the
15 retrieving means is a first retrieving means and further comprising:

 second retrieving means for retrieving message headers from the post office protocol 3 server upon connection of the at least one computing device to the
20 post office protocol 3 server; and

 displaying means for displaying a list of the message headers at the at least one computing device.

31. The data processing system of claim 27, wherein each user has a folder in the shared directory.

25 32. The data processing system of claim 27, wherein the incoming mail is kept in the storage at the post office protocol 3 server using a configurable option for the post office protocol 3 client.

20091116-030302

Docket No. AUS920020087US1

33. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for managing electronic mail messages from a post office protocol 3 server, the computer program product comprising:

5 first instructions for retrieving header information for electronic messages on the post office protocol 3 server to form retrieved header information;

second instructions for updating an attribute file, wherein the attribute file includes an indication of
10 whether an electronic mail message has been read;

third instructions for presenting a mail list on a display using the retrieved header information and the attribute file; and

fourth instructions, responsive to a selection of an
15 electronic mail message from the mail list, for retrieving and presenting the electronic mail message.

34. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for sharing a mail account from a post office protocol 3 server with a plurality of users having at
20 least one computing device having limited storage amongst the plurality of users, the computer program product comprising:

first instructions for retrieving portions of incoming mail in storage in a mail inbox at the post
25 office protocol 3 server, wherein the incoming mail is kept in storage in the mail box at the post office protocol 3 server;

second instructions for presenting a mail list using the portions of incoming mail retrieved from the mailbox
30 at the post office protocol 3 server;

2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176

Docket No. AUS920020087US1

third instructions for retrieving, from the post office protocol 3 server, individual messages from the mail inbox at the post office protocol 3 server if one of the users selects a message for display; and

- 5 fourth instructions for filtering the message from the individual messages to a folder in a shared directory in the local storage in response to a user request to save the message, wherein the shared directory is shared by each user sharing the mail account.

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